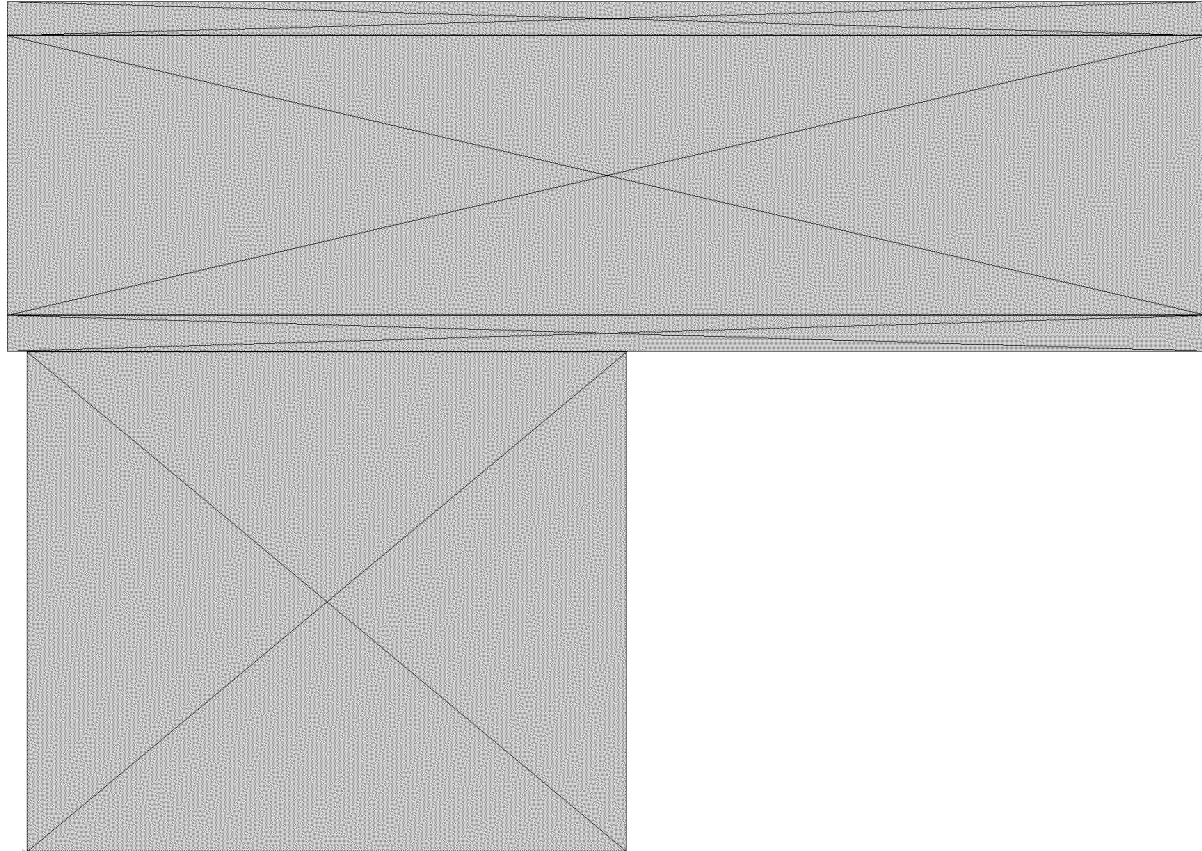


To: Coleman, Sam[Coleman.Sam@epa.gov]
From: EnergyGuardian
Sent: Thur 11/12/2015 10:45:21 PM
Subject: Pushing 'clean energy superpower,' Clinton plans \$30B for coal country

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Energy and environment headlines for the afternoon of Thursday, November 12, 2015



Pushing 'clean energy superpower,' Clinton plans \$30B for coal country

By Kevin Rogers

Coal communities would receive \$30 billion in federal help under a plan proposed Thursday by Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton, making her the first 2016 candidate to propose measures to help miners and the industry weather the transformation to a clean energy economy.

A key part of the proposal is built upon the Miners Protection Act, introduced in July by

Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., Shelley Moore Capito, D-W. Va., Bob Casey, D-Pa., and Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, to help insure that workers would retain benefits after coal company bankruptcies. Its provisions – many requiring congressional approval – also focus on retraining displaced workers, investing in carbon capture technology, improving coal communities' infrastructure, and helping them attract new investment.

Republicans quickly dismissed the proposal, labeling Clinton coal country's "Public Enemy No. 1" for backing the Obama administration's power plant regulations. Clinton's campaign, however, noted that coal as a power source is already declining due to the boom in shale gas production, energy efficiency, and declining costs for renewable energy.

"Building a 21st century clean energy economy in the United States will create new jobs and industries, deliver important health benefits, and reduce carbon pollution," the policy paper said. "But we can't ignore the impact this transition is already having on mining communities, or the threat it poses to the healthcare and retirement security of coalfield workers and their families."

The **policy brief** released by her campaign doesn't itemize the cost of its various provisions, nor does it give a timeframe for the total investment. Her campaign did not return a request for information on those details.

The plan includes measures to ensure that mine, power plant and transportation workers affected by coal company bankruptcies maintain their benefits. It would establish a "federal backstop" benefit program to ensure that retirees receive the pensions and health coverage they have earned. It would reform the black lung benefit program to allow miners to reopen cases against their employers and index the benefits to cost of living increases. It would also develop a program to help cover public school tax revenue gaps driven by coal plant and mine shutdowns.

Among the plan's investment proposals are new infrastructure spending on the Appalachian Development Highway System, investments to repurpose mine lands and former power plant sites using the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, expansion of broadband internet access in coal country, and the promotion of clean energy development on public lands as a potential public works program.

Clinton also calls for more funding for carbon capture and sequestration technology and an expansion to coal communities of the New Market Tax Credit program, designed to spur investment in low-income areas, as well capital gains tax relief to companies ready to invest there. She would also develop a Coal Communities Challenge Fund to provide competitive grants to assist education, job training, housing and health programs in affected coal communities.

Clinton, in her campaign so far, has pledged to uphold and strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan to cut power plant carbon pollution, develop policies to generate enough clean electricity to power every U.S. household by 2027, and phase down the extraction of fossil fuels on public lands.

The Republican National Committee said Clinton would better serve coal country by moving away from such policies.

"Hillary Clinton is Public Enemy No. 1 for coal miners and their communities because she wholeheartedly supports President Obama's EPA that is crippling their way of life," spokesman Michael Short said in a statement.

"If Hillary Clinton were truly on the side of coal country, she would stand up to extreme anti-energy environmentalists that run the Democrat Party instead of embracing their agenda that is killing jobs and driving up costs," he continued.

Environmental groups said the plan would ensure that miners aren't left behind.

"Clean energy, including wind, solar and energy efficiency, is already creating more jobs than fossil fuels -- and that pace is only going to accelerate," Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune said in a statement. "It's essential that all regions and communities, especially those who have helped power this country, experience the benefits of our transition to clean energy and aren't unfairly burdened."

The Obama administration last month awarded \$14.5 million to programs aimed at diversifying coal country economies. Obama has called on Congress to approve an additional \$10 billion for similar programs, though Republicans have not taken on the proposal in their budget legislation.

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NY Gov. Andrew Cuomo rejects proposed gas terminal off coast

By Michael Balsamo and David Klepper

LONG BEACH, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. Andrew Cuomo has rejected a proposal to build a liquefied natural gas terminal in the waters off New York and New Jersey, effectively killing the project amid an outcry from residents of some coastal communities that it could endanger the environment and be a target for terrorists.

The deep-water docking station known as Port Ambrose was to be built 19 miles off Jones Beach on Long Island and 29 miles off Long Brach, New Jersey. Liberty Natural Gas LLC, the company vying to develop Port Ambrose, said the port would allow it to inject natural gas into the New York-area pipeline, which could lower home heating bills there, among the most expensive in the nation.

The company had been trying for years to obtain approval from the federal Maritime Administration to operate the facility. But federal regulations require the governors of the neighboring states — New York and New Jersey — to approve the project. According to the regulations, either governor could object to the proposal, forcing the agency to deny Liberty's application.

"My administration carefully reviewed this project from all angles, and we have determined that the security and economic risks far outweigh any potential benefits," Cuomo said in a statement. "Superstorm Sandy taught us how quickly things can go from bad to worse when major infrastructure fails - and the potential for disaster with this project during extreme weather or amid other security risks is simply unacceptable."

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Tensions build over whether Paris climate deal is binding

By The Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France's leadership is bristling at U.S. resistance to making a global climate accord under negotiation in Paris next month legally binding.

French President Francois Hollande, whose country is hosting U.N. climate talks Nov. 30-Dec. 11, told reporters in Malta on Thursday that "if the deal is not legally binding, there is no accord, because that would mean it's not possible to verify or control commitments that are made."

He was responding to comments by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to the Financial Times saying an eventual agreement would have no legally binding targets.

The deal being negotiated in Paris would be the first asking all countries to reduce emissions. Some 150 countries have already submitted targets for cuts of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

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Alaska politicians eye sacred oil checks amid budget deficit

By Becky Bohrer

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Alaska is facing multibillion-dollar deficits amid chronically low oil prices and relying on savings to help balance the budget.

That's not sustainable, and is leaving first-term Gov. Bill Walker with some tough choices as he drafts the next budget.

One of those decisions could reduce the amount of the yearly check nearly every Alaskan receives just for living in the state.

The dividend, long seen as political dynamite to anyone who tries to tinker with it, could be affected as state leaders look for ways to close the gaping budget hole. Here's a look at the dividend, and what's being considered:

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Montana's Kavulla takes the helm at NARUC

By EnergyGuardian

Montana PSC Commissioner Travis Kavulla is the new president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, having been elected to a one-year term, succeeding Lisa Edgar of Florida.

Kavulla, a Republican, "brings to NARUC a reasoned, logical perspective," Edgar said.

In a [speech](#) in Austin, Texas following his election, Kavulla spoke of the challenges facing state regulators in an era where the energy sector is undergoing massive shifts, urging his colleagues to "focus on making sure that whatever future is the most affordable and reliable will ultimately prevail in the regulatory setting we create."

VW offers some employees amnesty for information on cheating

By David McHugh

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Volkswagen is telling non-managerial employees they can come forward with information about how the company cheated on U.S. emissions tests and they won't be fired.

In a move aimed at getting to the bottom of the scandal more quickly, Volkswagen brand manager Herbert Diess told staff in a letter that the company won't seek damages or fire employees for what they might reveal.

Workers could be transferred to other duties, however, and the company stressed it cannot get anyone off the hook for ongoing criminal probes.

The offer is valid until Nov. 30 and only applies to workers covered by collective bargaining agreements. "Managers are not included," said company spokesman Eric Felber.

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A message from America's Natural Gas Alliance

Clean is Powerful. Natural gas helps Georgia Power's plant generate electricity with 50% fewer emissions. Think about it.

[Learn more at www.thinkaboutit.org.](http://www.thinkaboutit.org)

Brazil fines Volkswagen \$13 million over emissions scheme

By The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The Brazilian government says its environmental protection agency has fined Volkswagen \$13 million over the German automaker's emissions cheating scheme.

Brazil's Ibama environmental agency also is requiring Volkswagen to present a plan for recalling vehicles sold here that contain software that turns on pollution controls during government tests and turns them off while on the road.

Thursday's statement from the government cites Volkswagen as saying just over 17,000 vehicles containing such software were sold in Brazil. The cars affected are diesel Amarok pickup trucks from 2011 and 2012.

The government says the fine levied against Volkswagen is the maximum possible under Brazilian law.

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From Australia to Zambia, slowing China economy causes pain

By Paul Wiseman and Rod McGuirk, The Associated Press

China's economic troubles have dropped on the doorstep of a sun-weathered house at 18 Edgar St. in Port Hedland on Australia's northwest coast.

Four years ago, the 50-year-old home, fabricated from cheap asbestos cement, sold for the equivalent of \$1.3 million. It's now for sale again — recently priced at \$310,000.

What happened to \$1 million in home equity? It vanished down the China sinkhole.

From Australia to Zambia, Chile to Indonesia, the pain of China's sharp economic slowdown is being felt in the form of depressed commodity prices, elevated unemployment and shrunken home prices in towns like Port Hedland that once thrived from supplying materials to Chinese factories.

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Barrick Gold to sell Nevada mine stakes for \$720 million

By The Associated Press

Barrick Gold Corp. is selling its interest in some Nevada mines for \$720 million in cash to help pare debt and focus more on core parts of its business.

The Toronto-based company said Thursday that it will sell its 100-percent interest in Bald Mountain mine and a 50-percent stake in Round Mountain mine for \$610 million to Kinross Gold Corp. The companies also are forming a joint venture that will own land on the Bald Mountain property.

Barrick also is also selling its stakes in a Spring Valley project and the Ruby Hill mine for \$110 million to subsidiaries of Waterton Precious Metals Fund II Cayman LP.

The company said the deals will help it strengthen its balance sheet and focus on core mines. Barrick Gold said it remains on track to cut its total debt by 23 percent since the start of the year.

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Regulators OK plan to dismantle Hudson PCB cleanup plant

By The Associated Press

FORT EDWARD, N.Y. (AP) — Federal regulators have approved General Electric's plan to dismantle a Hudson River PCB cleanup plant used during six years of dredging, which concluded this fall.

The Environmental Protection Agency says Thursday that its approval allows GE to begin

dismantling the 110-acre sediment processing plant and restore the site as outlined in the plan. The demobilization plan will continue into 2016.

The Hudson River Natural Resource Trustees, a three-member group of government officials, had asked the EPA to delay dismantling the plant in case more dredging is needed. EPA says a temporary facility could be employed if that happens.

The dredging project covered a 40-mile stretch of the river north of Albany.

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Profitable Siemens to increase dividend, buy back shares

By The Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Industrial equipment maker Siemens AG said Thursday it would increase its dividend and return billions to shareholders after a strong year.

The Munich-based company said it met its key profitability target in the fiscal year 2015, with a profit margin of 10.1 percent within its stated goal of 10-11 percent. Management predicted increased sales and earnings for 2016.

For the full business year, which for Siemens ended with the close of the July-September quarter, net income rose 34 percent to 7.4 billion euros (\$7.9 billion). Revenue rose 6 percent to 75.6 billion euros.

Siemens makes big-ticket equipment for companies and governments such as power turbines, trains and medical diagnostic machines.

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French activists 'reclaim' chairs to protest climate change

By The Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French climate activists have carried out an unusual bank heist, stealing chairs from two bank branches in a protest linked with the upcoming Paris talks on fighting global warming.

The group says Thursday it will use the chairs to organize a "citizens' summit" on social and environmental issues during the COP 21 climate negotiations, which will bring world leaders and tens of thousands of others to Paris later this month.

Activist Txetx Etcheverry said the group has "reclaimed" 196 chairs in a series of similar bank jobs in recent weeks.

During Thursday's stunt, BNP Paribas branch manager Cyril Hamer stood by and watched saying "let's just go with the flow and let them finish this peacefully."

Alarm over Delhi pollution doesn't stop Diwali fireworks

By Ashok Sharma

NEW DELHI (AP) — The fireworks have fizzled. The festival lights are coming down. What's left of the Hindu holiday of Diwali in the Indian capital — already considered the world's most polluted — is a toxic haze that has residents gagging for oxygen and hiding indoors.

Air pollution levels across New Delhi on Thursday, a day after the ancient festival of lights, were described as severe-to-critical, up to eight times higher than what India deems acceptable and 20 times what's recommended by the World Health Organization.

Such pollution happens every year, as offices and businesses shut down for India's biggest gift-giving holiday and many gather outdoors to set off powerful rockets at all hours of the night.

A government health advisory this week warned people to avoid all outdoor physical activity, citing a serious risk of respiratory effects following prolonged exposure to smoke-filled air.

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Week in Review – Obama Kills Keystone XL Pipeline Proposal

Sen. Sanders Rolls Out Climate Change Proposal.

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McCarthy must make deposition in Murray case: Judge

Administrator Gina McCarthy's personal involvement in the analysis of issues surrounding

the Clean Air Act means her testimony is relevant in Murray Energy's cost-of-regulation lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. District Court Judge John Preston Bailey ruled Thursday, The Hill reports.

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R.I. pension system suing BP, Plains over pipeline spills

The Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island, hitting back over pipeline spills that cost its investments millions in value, is pursuing class action lawsuits against BP and Plains All American, charging that the companies were misleading about their compliance with environmental laws, WPRO reports.

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No GOP primary backing for any candidate from Charles Koch

Industrial mogul and influential conservative Charles Koch has told USA Today he doesn't anticipate endorsing any Republican presidential candidate during the primary season.

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Oil slumps on crude inventory build

A seventh straight week of inventory builds, reported by the Energy Information Administration, sent oil prices into another tailspin Thursday, dropping to levels not seen since August. Light, sweet crude for December delivery lost \$1.18 to settle at \$41.75 a barrel on the Nymex, while in London, Brent tumbled \$1.75, or 3.8 percent, to \$44.06, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Energy Future gets key creditor backing for bankruptcy plan

Mutual fund company Fidelity Management & Research—formerly a critic—has now agreed to support Energy Future Holdings Corp.'s bankruptcy plan, and will have the opportunity to purchase a piece of the firm's valuable Oncor transmission business, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Blankenship set to begin defense with high-profile defense team

The high-profile lawyers set to begin their defense of former Massey Energy chief Don Blankenship in a case stemming from the Upper Big Branch Mine disaster have successfully defended a star-studded list of clients, the Charleston Gazette-Mail reports.

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Poneman had been exploring DOE departure for years

Daniel Poneman, the number-two official at the Energy Department for five years, had been negotiating with potential private employers two years before he actually left his post in the spring of 2014, according to documents E&E obtained in a Freedom of Information Act request.

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New Pattern wind farm dedicated in Texas

The 200-megawatt Logan's Gap Wind farm in Texas was inaugurated by Pattern Energy Thursday, FuelFix reports.

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Fracking opponents mobilizing against shale drilling in Britain

The British government may be taking steps to encourage shale drilling, but the moves have alarmed fracking opponents, who are marshalling forces against the practice, E&E reports.

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Upcoming Events

- Nov. 12, Washington: The American University School of International Service to host Rolling Stone climate writer Jeff Goodell for a discussion on the United Nations climate negotiations and the future of clean energy. 2:30 pm , 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.
- Nov. 12, Washington: The Bipartisan Policy Center to hold an event on nuclear waste management policy, featuring remarks from Sung-Tae Jung, vice president of Korea's Radioactive Waste Agency, and former Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Allison Macfarlane. 9:00 am , 1225 Eye Street NW.

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